

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Agricultural lands are sites that are utilized for the growing of crops, livestock and other produce for economic gain. These lands also provide sites for housing the people, tools and machinery that work the land.

IMPORTANCE:

- Throughout recent history, agricultural lands have served as the economic base of the county
- Agricultural lands in Lancaster County, combined with other agricultural land in this region, help produce food for people throughout the world
- Agricultural land, due to the relatively level topography required for its production, is usually easily developed for other uses
- Agricultural lands, including the typical structures that are built on it such as grain elevators, farmstead buildings, windmills etc. are a recognizable, “signature” landscapes in Lancaster County
- Many of the important cultural values to Lancaster County residents have been developed directly from their relationships and experiences with the County’s agricultural lands
- Agricultural lands remind Lancaster County’s increasing urban population of its dependence on the land for food

HUMAN IMPACT/THREAT:

- Urbanization of agricultural lands reduces or eliminates its production capability
- Agricultural land is often targeted for development in Lancaster County
- The extension of urbanization and human activity create increased conflict with agricultural lands that engage in livestock and row crop production
- Increased storm water runoff from urbanized areas impinge on traditional agricultural land management and production
- Acreage and other low density development projects impinge on agricultural land management and production
- Long term agricultural land ownership is distressed by the expansion of urbanization
- Urbanization increases the value of agricultural land and thereby induces conversion



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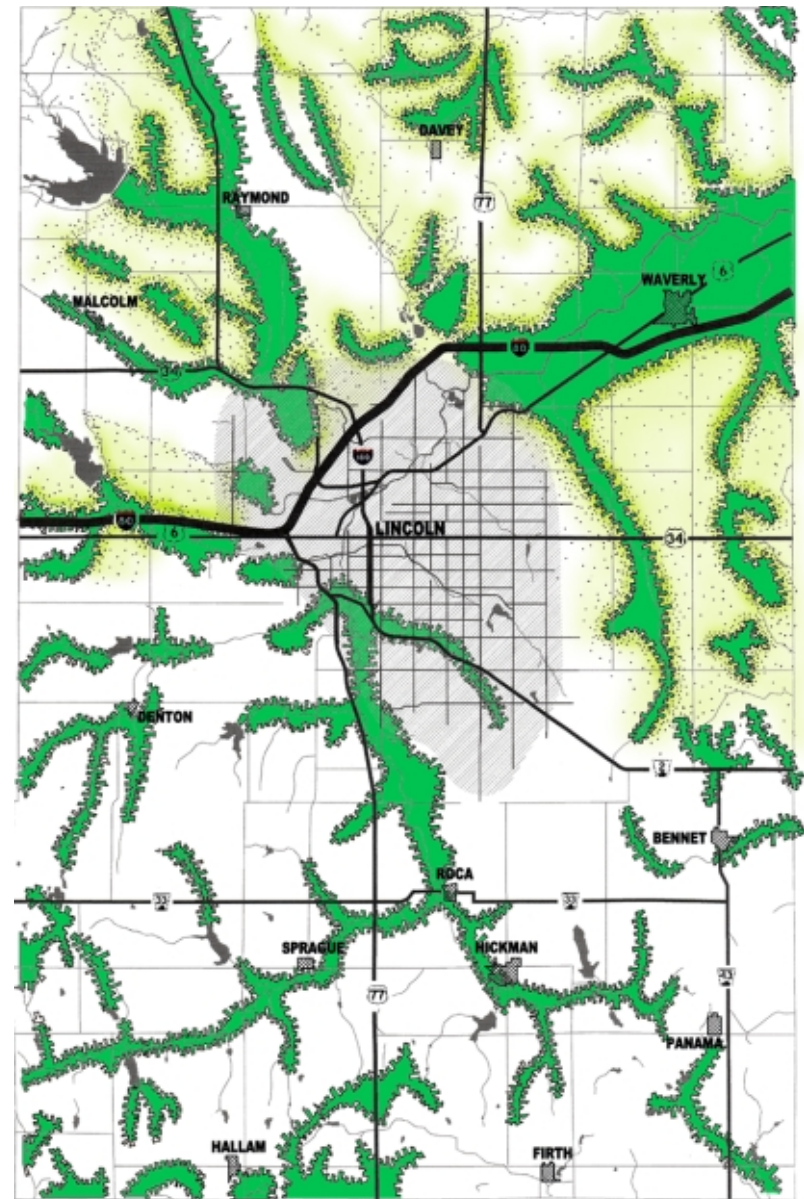
LEGEND



PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL LAND



SECONDARY AGRICULTURAL LAND



PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

- The size and shape of productive agricultural lands are required to occupy relatively large areas
- Agricultural land that exhibits minimum functional field size with non-crop edges could greatly benefit wildlife populations
- Productive agricultural lands create environmental impacts that should be regulated
- Agricultural lands that engage in livestock production create additional management issues that should be identified and addressed in advance of potential conflicts shaped by expanded urban development
- Right-to-farm policies should be developed
- Compensation issues associated with land “takings” should be reviewed, and a framework should be developed to assist the process of analyzing the issue from a “takings” vs. “givings” perspective
- Some activity on agricultural lands may need to shift to production that more directly supports the expanding urbanized area in Lancaster County, such as horticultural crops, truck farming, specialty crops, consumer harvest, nurseries, etc.